



AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVICES NEWSLETTER
U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL HONG KONG
October 2004

Through the monthly American Citizens Services newsletter, the Consulate General provides security and other information of general interest to U.S. citizens in Hong Kong and Macau who have subscribed by registering with the American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit and providing an email address or fax number.

If you believe others would benefit from receiving this newsletter, please forward it to them and encourage them to subscribe. To subscribe to receive our monthly newsletter and other updates, please register online by following this link <http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov/consular/acs7.htm>. If you do not wish to receive this monthly newsletter, or would like to be removed from our email/fax list, please email us at acshnk@yahoo.com or follow the instructions at the bottom of this newsletter to unsubscribe.

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Vote NOW

We encourage all U.S. citizens to mark and immediately mail their absentee ballots to their local election officials as soon as possible. This will increase the chances of the ballot being received by the State deadlines (see below) and being counted. Any U.S. citizens who requested an absentee ballot from their local election official in the U.S. and who have not yet received the ballot may contact the Consulate for a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Non-governmental organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, may also have FWABs available. Please contact those organizations directly; the League of Women Voters president may be reached at 2234-0243 during regular working hours. Please read carefully the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) Guide, on line at www.fvap.gov, regarding the individual State's requirements for the FWAB to be accepted including receipt deadlines.

Information on the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

The September 2004 Voting Information Newsletter issued by the FVAP and previously sent in our September newsletter contains detailed information on the FWAB. To review this information, please use the following link:
<http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vin/pdf04vins/sep04vin.pdf>.

State Deadlines to Receive Absentee Ballots

The FVAP has provided the following information on State deadlines to receive absentee ballots. Please also see below concerning courier options to return voted absentee ballots.

State-By-State Ballot Return Deadlines

The following list provides state-by-state deadlines for returning the voted ballot and/or postmark requirements for the November 2, 2004 General Election. States that allow use of the FVAP Electronic Transmission Service (ETS) for the voted ballot will also be noted (remember to mail the original ballot). Visit www.fvap.gov <<http://www.fvap.gov>> for state updates and Appendix C of the Voting Assistance Guide for instructions on ETS, including a fax cover sheet. Follow all state requirements (such as Notary and Witnessing Requirements <<http://www.fvap.gov/vao/notaryreqts.html>>) in the Guide before returning the voted ballot.

Alabama: The Voted Ballot must be postmarked by 5:00 P.M. on November 1, 2004 and received by the county absentee election manager by Noon on November 2, 2004.

Alaska: The Voted Ballot must be postmarked by November 2, 2004 and sent by mail service equal to first class. Voted Ballots mailed from outside the United States, including APO and FPO addresses, must be received by November 17, 2004. Voted Ballots mailed stateside must be received by November 12, 2004. If voting by fax, voted ballots must be received by 8 p.m. (Alaska time) on or before election day.

American Samoa: The Voted Ballot must arrive by 1:30 PM on November 2, 2004.

Arizona: The Voted Ballot must arrive by 7:00 P.M on November 2, 2004. You may return the voted ballot by fax.

Arkansas: The Voted Ballot must be executed by November 2, 2004 and arrive by 5:00 P.M on November 12, 2004.

California: The Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls (8:00 P.M) on November 2, 2004.

Colorado: The Voted Ballot must arrive by 7:00 P.M on November 2, 2004. You may return the voted ballot by fax.

Connecticut: The Voted Ballot must arrive before the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Delaware: Voted Ballots arriving by Noon on November 1, 2004 will be counted in their entirety (full ballot). Ballots for Federal offices received after Noon on November 1, 2004 but before the close of polls on November 2, 2004 will be counted.

District of Columbia: The Voted Ballot must be postmarked by midnight on November 2, 2004 and arrive by November 12, 2004. Faxing allowed only when military service prevents applicant from receiving absentee ballot and returning the voted ballot within 45 days. See Guide for further instructions.

Florida: The Voted Ballot must be received by the close of polls on November 2, 2004. The Federal office portion of a ballot mailed from outside the United States will be counted if it is dated or postmarked by November 2, 2004 and received by November 12, 2004. Overseas Uniformed Services members may return the voted ballot to the fax number provided by the local Supervisor of Elections.

Georgia: The Voted Ballot must arrive by 7:00 P.M on November 2, 2004.

Guam: The Voted Ballot must arrive by 8:00 P.M on November 2, 2004.

Hawaii: The Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004. You may return the voted ballot by fax if you requested the blank ballot be sent to you by fax. A waiver of secrecy and ballot must be received by 6 p.m. (Hawaiian Standard Time) on election day.

Idaho: The Voted Ballot must arrive by 8:00 P.M on November 2, 2004.

Illinois: The Voted Ballot must arrive in sufficient time for it to be delivered to the polling place by 7:00 P.M on November 2, 2004.

Indiana: Ballot must arrive in sufficient time for it to be delivered to the precinct election board before the close of polls on November 2, 2004. It is recommended that the ballot be mailed to be received by October 29, 2004. You may return the voted ballot by fax.

Iowa: Ballot must be postmarked by November 1, 2004 and arrive by November 8, 2004.

Kansas: Ballots must arrive by close of polls on November 2, 2004. You may return the voted ballot by fax.

Kentucky: Ballots must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Louisiana: Ballots must arrive by November 2, 2004. You may return the voted ballot by fax.

Maine: Ballots must arrive by 8:00 PM on November 2, 2004. In certain emergency situations, such as combat situations, Uniformed Service members may fax the voted ballot.

Maryland: Ballot must be postmarked by November 1, 2004. Ballots mailed from outside the United States must be received by 4:00 PM on November 12, 2004. Ballots mailed stateside must be received by 4:00 PM on November 3, 2004.

Massachusetts: Ballots mailed from within the U.S. must arrive by 8:00 PM on November 2, 2004. Ballots mailed from outside the U.S. must be postmarked by November 2, 2004 and received by November 12, 2004, to be counted.

Michigan: Voted Ballot must arrive by 8:00 PM on November 2, 2004.

Minnesota: Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Mississippi: Voted Ballot must arrive by 5:00 P.M. on November 1, 2004. You may return the voted ballot by fax.

Missouri: Voted Ballot must arrive before 7:00 P.M. on November 2, 2004.

Montana: Voted Ballot must arrive by 8:00 P.M. on November 2, 2004. See the Guide for counties that allow return of voted ballot by fax.

Nebraska: Voted Ballot must be received by the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Nevada: Voted Ballot must arrive at the local election office by 7:00 P.M. on November 2, 2004.

New Hampshire: Voted Ballot must arrive by 5:00 P.M. on November 2, 2004.

New Jersey: Voted Ballot must arrive at the county board of elections office by the close of polls on November 2, 2004. If you are overseas, you may return the voted ballot by fax, not later than 8 p.m. (EST) on election day. You must also submit the original ballot by airmail together with certification.

New Mexico: Voted Ballot must arrive before the close of polls on November 2, 2004. You may return the voted ballot by fax.

New York: Voted Ballot must be postmarked by November 1, 2004 and be received by November 9, 2004. For active duty military, in 2004 only, the deadline for receipt of ballots is November 15, 2004.

North Carolina: Voted Ballot must be returned by 5:00 P.M. on November 1, 2004. Military and civilians serving with U.S. Armed Forces outside the U.S., and Peace Corps members may return the voted ballot by fax.

North Dakota: Voted Ballot must be postmarked by November 1, 2004. Ballots received before the canvassing board meets will be counted (canvassing board meets beginning 3 days after the election). You may return the voted ballot by fax.

Ohio: Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004. Ballots mailed from outside the United States will be counted if signed and postmarked by the close of polls on November 2, 2004 and received by November 12, 2004.

Oklahoma: Voted Ballot must arrive by 7:00 P.M. on November 2, 2004. Under certain limited circumstances, you may be able to return the voted ballot by fax.

Oregon: Voted Ballot must arrive by 8:00 P.M. on November 2, 2004.

Pennsylvania: Voted Ballot must arrive by 5:00 P.M. on October 29, 2004.

Puerto Rico: Voted Ballot must be postmarked by November 2, 2004 and be received before 3:00 P.M. on November 2, 2004.

Rhode Island: Voted Ballot must arrive by 9:00 P.M. on November 2, 2004. Military and overseas citizens except for "Other" U.S. citizens residing outside the U.S. (FPCA, 8d) may fax the voted ballot.

South Carolina: Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004. You may return the voted ballot by fax only in declared emergency situations.

South Dakota: Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Tennessee: Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Texas: Voted Ballot must be received by the close of polls on November 2, 2004. Ballots mailed from outside the United States will be counted if placed in delivery by 7:00 P.M. on November 2, 2004 and received by November 7, 2004 (no rollover to Monday). Active duty military overseas or spouse or dependant of the member in hostile fire pay, imminent danger pay or combat zone area may fax voted ballot.

Utah: Voted Ballot must be postmarked by November 1, 2004 and be received by the county by Noon on the day of canvassing. Canvassing takes place 7 - 14 days following election. Some counties allow you to return the voted ballot by fax in emergency situations.

Vermont: Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Virginia: Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Virgin Islands: Voted Ballot must be postmarked by November 2, 2004 and be received by November 12, 2004. You may fax the voted ballot.

Washington State: Voted Ballot must be postmarked by November 2, 2004 and be received by November 17, 2004. Some counties allow you to return the voted ballot by fax. Visit www.secstate.wa.gov/elections, select County Auditors & Election Departments to find out which counties accept faxing.

West Virginia: Ballot must be voted, signed, dated and mailed by November 2, 2004 and arrive by November 8, 2004.

Wisconsin: Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Wyoming: Voted Ballot must arrive by the close of polls on November 2, 2004.

Courier Options to Return Voted Absentee Ballots

Federal Express Offer - Return Of Absentee Ballots At No Charge

Federal Express has extended an offer to return absentee ballots for the 2004 U.S. presidential election at no charge. Please see the Federal Express instructions below:

Offer valid until November 1st, 2004

- Voters MUST drop off ballots at a FedEx Service Center listed below during office hours. No pick up service will be provided. The service is not available at FedEx drop boxes.
- A FedEx envelope must be used.
- The sender needs to fill out airway bill and include the voter's address in Hong Kong and the U.S. election official/recipient's address.
- Fill in airway bill as follows:
 1. Total package: 1
 2. Total weight: 0.5 kg
 3. Commodity description: "Absentee Ballot"
 4. Value for customs: "No Commercial Value"
 5. Express Package service: Please check "FedEx Intl. Priority"
 6. Packaging: Please check "FedEx Letter / Envelope"
 7. Payment: Please check "Third Party"
 8. Sender must sign and date

For further information about this program, please contact Federal Express directly at their Customer Service hotline (2730-3333).



FedEx Drop-off Locations

<u>Address</u>	<u>Office Hours</u>
Hong Kong Territory	
Shop 43, 1/F., Admiralty Center, Admiralty	09:00 - 19:30 (Mon - Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
G/F., Hop Shi Industrial Building, 29 - 31 Lee Chung Street, Chai Wan	09:00 - 20:00 (Mon) 09:00 - 21:00 (Tue-Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
G/F, 12/P Smithfield Road, Cheung Hing Industrial Building, Kennedy Town	09:00 - 19:30 (Mon- Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
Kowloon Territory	
Workshop C, G/F, VGA Building, 532 Castle Peak Road, Cheung Sha Wan	09:00 - 19:30 (Mon - Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
Shop 1, G/F., Houston Center, 63 Mody Road, TST East	09:00 - 19:30 (Mon - Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
Rm 606, Ocean Centre, Harbour City 5 Canton Road, TST	09:00 - 19:30 (Mon - Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
100 Sung Wong Toi Road, Tokwawan	09:00 - 20:00 (Mon) 09:00 - 21:00 (Tue-Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
G/F., Hang Sang Industrial Building, 185 Wai Yip Street, Kwun Tong	09:00 - 20:00 (Mon-Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
New Territories	
Unit 2-3, 6/F., Global Gateway, 168 Yeung Uk Road, Tsuen Wan	09:00 - 20:00 (Mon) 09:00 - 21:00 (Tue-Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
Unit B, 5/F., Ever Gain Centre, 28 On Muk Street, Shek Mun Shatin	09:00 - 20:00 (Mon-Fri) 09:00 - 18:00 (Sat)
Lantau Island	
Room 208, Asia Airfreight Terminal 10 Chun Ping Road Hong Kong International Airport Lantau Island	08:00 - 19:00 (Mon - Sat)

DHL has also indicated it may offer a discount on returning absentee ballots. We will post this information on the Consulate General Web site, under Voting Information, once we have those details.

Improved Access to Federal Voting Assistance Program Web Site

The FVAP recently provided us with the following information:

FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IMPROVES ACCESS TO WEBSITE

In response to concerns from citizens residing overseas, access to the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website at <http://www.fvap.gov> has been modified to further increase the number of Internet service providers able to access the site.

The following website addresses will also allow access to the FVAP website:

- * www.defenselink.mil/fvap
- * www.dod.mil/fvap
- * www.defense.gov/fvap
- * www.pentagon.mil/fvap
- * www.pentagon.gov/fvap

While the changes will make the FVAP website accessible to most users, it does not automatically guarantee 100% access to the site. There are many networks that make up the Internet, and some of these networks may employ independent protection mechanisms that prevent communication with the system.

Questions regarding the above may also be referred to the Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program, Department of Defense, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington DC 20301-1155. Additionally, the FVAP can be reached via e-mail at vote@fvap.ncr.gov or from Hong Kong during U.S. business hours on the toll-free number 800-908809, fax 800-968820.

Change in U.S. Passport & Consular Report of Birth Abroad Pickup Times and Place

Effective October 5 U.S. citizens or their authorized messengers may pick up their new U.S. passport and/or Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) at the specially marked patio window by the Consulate General's public entrance from 2:00 – 4:00PM, Monday through Friday. The person collecting the documents must still present the date-stamped receipt and the applicant's current passport, if any. The current passport will be cancelled and returned to the person collecting the documents. This change in procedures means that persons just picking up these completed documents do not need to pass through the same security checks as other consular customers do to enter the Consulate building nor take a ticket to wait for ACS assistance. U.S. citizens needing to collect their passports or CRBAs outside of these hours should notify ACS in advance.

Collect Processed Passports ASAP to Avoid Reapplication Requirements

The Consulate urges all U.S. citizens who have applied for new U.S. passports or CRBAs to collect those documents as close to the estimated pickup date as possible. We have a large inventory of uncollected passports awaiting collection. As we recently did, uncollected passports may be cancelled and returned to the Department of State; those

applicants will need to reapply, including paying new fees, if they wish to receive a new passport.

U.S. Passports and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad Delivery by Hongkong Post

Effective immediately, U.S. citizens have the option to receive their U.S. passport, Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) or other applicable American Citizens Services items by courier under the circumstances specified below. This optional service is provided by Hong Kong Post. If you wish to utilize this service, please go to the Hong Kong Post services window in the Non-Immigrant Visa waiting room located on the Ground Floor. You will need to pay all applicable fees to the Hong Kong Post on-site representative.

Fees are per piece (e.g. each passport or CRBA). The Hong Kong delivery fee is \$25HKD. The Macau delivery fee is \$65HKD. This service is offered as a convenience. Passport and CRBA fees collected with the application(s) cover the cost of processing the application(s) only.

U.S. citizens are eligible to receive their U.S. passport or CRBA by courier return if:

- The U.S. citizen is applying for a regular passport, visa pages, passport amendment or a CRBA;
- The U.S. citizen is present in Hong Kong or Macau at the time of application and when the requested items are delivered;
- The delivery address is in Hong Kong or Macau;
- If renewing a currently valid U.S. passport, the applicant's currently valid U.S. passport is cancelled during the application; and
- The U.S. citizen is currently registered with the U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong. If the U.S. citizen is not registered, s/he may do so online at <http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov/consular/acs.htm>.

Courier return is **not** available for reasons including but not limited to:

- During the processing of a new U.S. passport, the applicant opts to retain a still valid U.S. passport. New passports can only be delivered after the prior passport is cancelled at the Consulate General.
- Emergency passports cannot be returned via courier; these are normally issued while the applicant waits.

Other important items

- When the passport application has been processed and the passport is ready for collection (usually ten calendar days), we will provide the passport(s) to Hong Kong Post for qualified applicants who chose courier return. The current delivery estimates are two days for Hong Kong delivery and three days for Macau delivery.
- The passport and/or CRBA will only be handled at the Hong Kong Post counter at the U.S. Consulate General or in Hong Kong Post premises to ensure security of the items. In the event an item is lost or stolen, Hong Kong Post may offer a maximum compensation of \$2,500HKD.
- The recipient must sign a delivery receipt. If no one is available, a notification card will be left for the addressee to inform him/her to call Hong Kong Post to arrange another delivery attempt or collection at one of the 130 Post Offices. If no response is received from the addressee within 1-2 days and if the second delivery attempt is unsuccessful, the items will be returned to the U.S. Consulate General.
- U.S. citizens who chose courier return and do not receive their documents within 30 days should contact Hong Kong Post at 2921-2211. Passports not collected from the

U.S. Consulate General within one year after the application date will be cancelled and returned to the Department of State without refund to the applicant.

- Certain passport applicants may apply using the “Passport by mail” form. This form was designed for use in the U.S. but is used by overseas Embassies and Consulates to process applications. The fee paid with the “Passport by mail” form does not include mail or courier delivery for overseas applicants.

How to Avoid Delays in Receiving Passport Services

First and foremost, please come early to the ACS Unit. We open at 8:30AM and close at noon Monday through Friday, reopening at 1:30PM until 4:00PM except Wednesday afternoons plus local and U.S. holidays when we are closed. Customers who come closer to our opening hours, when we tend to have fewer customers, will receive faster service. Customers who come closer to our closing hours may need to wait longer as we assist customers who arrived earlier. Monday mornings and the day after holidays are especially busy times for us so if you seek non-emergency services you may wish to consider coming at other times/days.

Second, to provide equitable services to all customers we use a ticketing machine to call customers to the window in order of when they took the ticket. The ticketing machine is located at the entrance to the ACS waiting room. Please take a ticket when you enter and again if you have been given a form for completion such as adding pages or applying for a new passport (most forms are available on line at our web site, <http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov>, and we encourage customers to complete the relevant forms prior to requesting consular services).

Third, we have recently received applications for visa pages additions, passport renewals, emergency passports and other passport services that have been incomplete and thus delayed. We strongly advise U.S. citizens to plan travel in advance including any requirements or updates related to their travel documents. The most common reasons for delay:

- **Damaged Passports**: We cannot provide passport services such as adding visa pages to passports that are damaged. Traveling with a secure passport protects your personal security and protects U.S. national security. In addition, travelers using damaged passports may be detained, denied admission and/or otherwise inconvenienced when traveling abroad. Security features of a U.S. passport may be impacted by damage to the biographic/photograph page, deterioration to passport stitching due to multiple visa pages inserts etc. When a passport is damaged, a new passport application must be made. For more information, please see: <http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov/consular/acs/damagedpassports.htm>.
- **Incorrect Photos**: We are often presented with photos that are too small, too dark, have an improper background, have a border or otherwise do not comply with current passport photo standards. For more details on current passport photo requirements, please see: http://travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/composition_checklist.html.
- **Special Requirements For Minor Children**: Passport services for minor children under 14 years old have special requirements enacted by the United States Congress due to concerns regarding international child abduction. Requirements often missing at the time of application are the child's presence, the child's birth certificate, a birth certificate that contains incorrect or incomplete information, the current passport of the parents/legal guardians, consent letter from the non-applying parent, or court order that grants sole custody to the applying parent or court order specifically authorizing

passport issuance to the minor regardless of custody. For current requirements, please see: <http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov/consular/acs/passports.htm>.

In summary, please keep your travel documents current and in good condition. Based on reasons including but limited to the above, we may not be able to provide services despite our wish to facilitate the travel of U.S. citizens. The information above describes the most common reasons for delay. For more information on passport processing and requirements, please see <http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov/consular/acs/passports.htm>.

Current Travel Information

On August 1, 2004, 1400 EDT, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security raised the homeland security threat level to ORANGE (HIGH) for the financial services sectors in New York City, Northern New Jersey and Washington, D.C. The threat level for the rest of the nation remains at YELLOW (ELEVATED). Further information about the announcement may be obtained at the DHS Internet website at www.dhs.gov or www.ready.gov.

The Department of State continues to monitor security conditions overseas and, as always, will promptly disseminate information affecting the safety of Americans abroad through its consular information program. These documents are available on the Department's Internet website at www.travel.state.gov.

Since our last newsletter (September 2004), the Department of State has issued Travel Warnings or Public Announcements about travel to the following countries or areas:

The Bahamas, Public Announcement, 10/01
Pakistan, Travel Warning, 09/24
Iraq, Travel Warning, 09/17
Cayman Islands, Travel Warning, 09/14
Nepal, Travel Warning, 09/14
Indonesia, Travel Warning, 09/13
World Wide Caution, Public Announcement, 09/10 expiring on 03/10/2005
Grenada, Travel Warning, 09/09
Cuba, Travel Warning, 09/09
Russia, Public Announcement, 09/03.

The Department of State also issued an updated Avian Flu Fact Sheet on September 30, 2004.

In addition to these travel warnings and public announcements, the State Department issues [Consular Information Sheets](http://travel.state.gov) for every country of the world with information on such matters as the health conditions, crime, unusual currency or entry requirements, any areas of instability, and the location of the nearest embassy or consulate in the subject country. The full texts of these and other current documents are available at the Department of State, Consular Affairs, Web site <http://travel.state.gov>.

Internet-Based Registration System (IBRS)

The State Department recently launched a new and much improved consular website, <http://travel.state.gov>. The Web site's appearance, usability and functionality have all been enhanced, and it has improved organization and navigational tools to help users find information more quickly and accurately.

An important new function is secure online travel registration, which will allow U.S. citizens (USCs) to record foreign trip and residence information that the Department of State can use to communicate with USCs and assist USCs in case of an emergency.

USCs around the world who travel or reside abroad can access this site either through a link on travel.state.gov, or directly, at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. The Department of State invites USCs to register themselves and their families and get acquainted with travel registration. If USCs are already registered with this consulate, the Department asks that they please re-register on line to update their records.

The new Internet travel registration service for USCs allows USCs to register and update their contact information on the Internet at any time, making it easier for USCs to keep their information current. The site also provides USCs with up-to-date travel information customized to the USC's unique travel agenda and itinerary. The data USCs provide is secured behind Department of State firewalls, accessed only by cleared personnel in Embassies, Consulates, and the Department of State, and releasable only with the USC's permission under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

Please let the Department know how you like the new site. If you encounter any difficulties or have any questions about this travel registration website, please send an e-mail to caibrs@state.gov <<mailto:caibrs@state.gov>>. If USCs have specific questions about their registration with this consulate please contact us by email: acshnk@yahoo.com <<mailto:acshnk@yahoo.com>>.

Minors Must Appear in Person for Passport Services

Effective March 26, 2004, The Department of State ended the passport Mail-In Renewal Application for minors. Therefore, eligibility for the mail-in program will be limited to those individuals that are able to submit a full-validity passport issued when the applicant was over the age of 16. The new regulations require that all minors personally appear at the Consulate for passport services, including new passports and adding visa pages.

Minor applicants will also now be required to pay the normal US\$ 30 passport execution fee regardless whether they are registered with the US Consulate.

The change is being implemented to enhance accurate identification of applicants and to aid in the prevention of international child abduction and trafficking.

For more detailed information on passport application procedures, please visit our web site at hongkong.usconsulate.gov.

Holidays and Other Closures

Please note that the Consulate will be closed on the following official holidays for the remainder of 2004.

Monday, October 11	Columbus Day	A
Friday, October 22	Chung Yeung Festival	L
Thursday, November 11	Veterans Day	A

Thursday, November 25 Thanksgiving Day A

Saturday, December 25 Christmas Day A/L
(observed Friday, December 24)

Monday, December 27 First Week-Day after Christmas Day L

A - American Holiday/L - Local Holiday

Other useful Internet addresses available for U.S. Citizens:

U.S. Federal Government: <http://www.firstgov.gov>; U.S. Department of State Consular Affairs: <http://travel.state.gov>; U.S. Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov>; U.S. Federal Aviation Administration: <http://www.faa.gov>; U.S. Internal Revenue Service: <http://www.irs.gov>; Social Security Administration: <http://www.ssa.gov>; SSA Newsletter: <http://www.ssa.gov/eneews/>; Federal Voting Assistance: <http://www.fvap.gov>; U.S. Customs & Border Protection: <http://www.cbp.gov> (for information including importation of household pets, animal and plant health inspection, etc); U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.usda.gov> (for information on food products, food safety and inspection service); Hong Kong Immigration Department: <http://www.info.gov.hk/immd>.

Published by the ACS Unit, U.S. Consulate General, Hong Kong, tel: 2841-2211, 2841-2323, 2841-2225; fax: 2845-4845; e-mail: acshnk@yahoo.com; Web site: <http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov>; hours: 8:30-12:00, 1:30-4:00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, Wednesdays 08:30-12:00, closed on U.S. and local holidays.

If you would prefer not to receive further messages from this office, please email us at acshnk@yahoo.com or follow these instructions:

1. Click on the Reply button.
2. Replace the Subject field with the word REMOVE.
3. Click the Send button.

You will receive one additional e-mail message confirming your removal.